Montana Newsletter

Montana State Library

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MONTANA NEWSLETTER

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Vol. 8 April 16, 1973 No. 3

LIBRARY COMMISSION NAMES ACTING STATE LIBRARIAN

The State Library Commission, meeting in regular session in Helena on April 6, named Richard C. Peel as Acting State Librarian effective upon the departure of David R. Hoffman, at the end of April. Peel received a scholarship grant from the State Library in 1969 to attend graduate library school at the University of British Columbia, and assumed responsibility for services to state institutions and to the handicapped in July 1970. He was named Coordinator of Special Library Services by the Commission in July 1972. David Hoffman, who succeeded Ruth Longworth as State Librarian upon her retirement in 1970, will leave the State Library at the end of this month.

At the same meeting, the Commission approved the distribution of an announcement of the position open as State Librarian: the announcement has been widely distributed, and copies are available upon request to the State Library. The Commission hopes to make a first review of applications by mid-May.

The Commission has authorized the publication of the following statement regarding direct library service to persons outside library taxing areas:

On and after July 1, 1973, the State Library will cease its service of lending books directly to individuals and schools in areas without access to tax-supported public libraries. Although the library has historically provided books and other library materials to rural areas, it has held as a primary goal the establishment of quality public libraries adequately supported with local funds, and supplemented by the resources of the State Library.

Continued direct service from the State Library has been regarded by many as a deterrent to the establishment of local libraries. More than 90 percent of the people of Montana, in forty-four of the state's fifty-six counties, have agreed to provide their own basic library service supported with local taxes. In defense of its budget request for the 1975 biennium, the Commission stated its belief that "it is not in the best interest of the State government to substitute for what has been defined in the law as a function of local government" and it did not ask for funds to serve individuals or schools in areas without public libraries.

Consequently, beginning in July, requests should be channeled through public, college and university, or special libraries, on request forms provided by the State Library for this purpose. The full resources of the State Library will continue to be available to every resident of Montana, through the public, academic, and special libraries of the state.

Direct service will continue to be made available to state employees to provide information needed in the course of their work, and to handicapped persons who use the Library's Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

With considerable reluctance, the Commission was forced to adopt an operating budget for the coming year which will reduce the overall service capability of the library. Although state funds were increased, the state funding is not sufficient to support all activities paid with federal funds under the Library Services and Construction Act. Five full-time positions and one part-time position will be dropped at the end of the current fiscal year, and one full-time position will be reduced to half-time. Purchase of library materials will be curtailed in kind and quantity, and IN-WATS telephone service will be eliminated.

In the face of a funding cut, the Commission heard reports from staff which indicated a 29.12 percent increase in circulation for the nine months ending on March 31 over the same period last year, and a 36.56 percent increase in reference/interlibrary loan requests received by mail and telephone for the same period.

The staff of the State Library will continue to do its best to process requests for information and for loan of materials, to advise and assist local libraries and governing bodies on means to develop or improve services, and to obtain materials held by other libraries to meet local needs.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST BIBLIOGRAPHIC CENTER BOARD MEETING

The Board of Directors of the Pacific Northwest Bibliographic Center, meeting in Seattle on April 10, named Donald Duncan to fill the unexpired term of David Hoffman, present Board chairman. Earle Thompson, Dean of Library Services of the University of Montana and member of the Montana State Library Commission, will represent Montana on the Board. The Board heard reports from Director Lura Currier that requests for interlibrary loan location received at the Center during the first nine months of the present year have almost equalled the total received during the last full year; and that requests for photocopy service received thus far this year have already exceeded similar requests for the previous full year.

COLUMBIA FALLS LIBRARY OPEN HOUSE

An official open house for the Columbia Falls Branch Library marked the beginning of National Library week for the Flathead County Library. Some seventy persons attended a special luncheon at the Methodist Church, and well over three hundred visited the library during the afternoon on April 8.

HELENA FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY MEET

Some 140 persons attended a dinner meeting of the Friends of the Helena Public Library on April 10, marking National Library Week. Speaker for the evening was Norman Winestine; a slide presentation on new and recently-constructed library buildings was given. The library has announced a special program series for the spring on "Helena Outdoors".

REVENUE SHARING FOR MONTANA LIBRARIES

The City-County Library of Missoula has reported that a total of $213,000 in revenue sharing funds, half from the city and half from the county, half from the present year and half from next year, has been committed toward construction and equipment costs for the new City-County Library building.

Montana Public Libraries which have not yet returned questionnaires on allocation of revenue-sharing money are encouraged to do so as soon as their local governments have decided upon use of these funds.

David R. Hoffman
State Librarian

The Montana State Library Commission has accepted with deep regret the resignation of the State Librarian, David R. Hoffman. Mr. Hoffman's resignation, submitted to the Commission on February 8, will become effective on April 30.

Under Mr. Hoffman's administration programs of the State Library have been developed to provide efficient service in many areas:

- Expansion of public library service, to the point where some 90 percent of the state's residents are currently being served through the public library

- Assistance in demonstration and development of public library federations

- Assistance in construction of new and remodeled library facilities in several communities

- Excellent interlibrary cooperation through a library networks system which makes available the resources of the Pacific Northwest and libraries nation and world wide

- A level of service to the blind and physically handicapped which has received national recognition

- Demonstrated and acknowledged value of the library in the treatment/therapy program in each of the state institutions

- Reference service to state legislators, government officials, and employees

- Educational programs and workshops to upgrade the quality of librarianship

During Mr. Hoffman's term as State Librarian genuine progress has been made in developing a philosophy to encourage maximum local funding of public library service.

We of the Commission are much indebted to Mr. Hoffman for his dynamic leadership and for the vision which he has given the library community in Montana. We shall miss him but we wish him every success.

MONTANA STATE LIBRARY COMMISSION

Don Gibson, Chairman
William Conklin, Vice-Chairman
Doris Davies
Dolores Colburg, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Earle Thompson, Dean of Library Service, University of Montana

THURBER'S
HELENA